

CANADA – Cape Breton University

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¹ To update the agenda just click right on your moose

I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

My overall feeling after my semester abroad is disappointment. I may have chosen the wrong destination, that's why it didn't go as expected. However, I traveled with 3 of my classmates/friends and this changed the whole experience. It turned into a bad to a good experience because we have been through it all together, as classmates, roommates. This bad choice was all my fault, since I didn't make enough research about where I was heading. I thought this city being in Canada will suffice to make it a good destination, but obviously, I was wrong. And you will see why I don't recommend this destination if you are going alone.

II. Before the travel

A. Preparation

1. Visa

You will only need a standard visa if you are studying for less than 6 months in Canada. It is called AVE (autorisation de voyage électronique) and it costs around 7\$. If you want to work during your experience you'll have to pay for a study visa which is around 200\$.

2. The flight

Once you know your destination, book your flight as early as possible around 4 month before traveling, this is where you will find the cheapest flight. Since there are many connections, the travel will be expensive. Try to look up with flights comparator such as SkyScanner or Liligo (These are my favorites). A good deal would probably go around 600-700 euros round trip. Average prices go for 800-900 for round trip and expensive will be around 1000-1200 euros. I suggest you leave from Marseille because it's usually cheaper but it depends on what you found online.

3. My luggage

Obviously, you gate for a cold country, but you should wait until landed in to buy your cold stuff because it is cheaper out there. I paid a big coat for 65 euros whereas I should have paid 300euros for similar clothes in France. Gloves and tights are also cheaper. So, basically there is nothing such special to bring in your luggage. You may want to buy some thermolactyl shirts to bear the cold. Sunglasses are also a good buy due to sun reflection on massive snow.

4. Bank account

I did not change or open a bank account in Canada. I simply contracted a deal with my French Bank Crédit Agricole which allows me to pay for anything and cash out with no fees. I only paid 2 euros a month for it.

5. Insurance

You may want to ask your parents insurance (if they already cover you) to see if there's an offer for you to be covered in Canada. I did contact them and there was an offer. I didn't even pay for an extra for me to be covered. They covered my on Health insurance and Third party insurance as well. Otherwise you will have to contract those insurance and it is expensive, like 60 euros a month.

B. Housing

1. Where to live

For a better student experience, we suggest you to live on campus because this is where you will meet most of people your age. We chose to leave in Glace Bay near to CBU but it wasn't a good experience. This is a small town, not attractive. It was really annoying, especially if you have no car, it would be worse. So, choose between the campus residence or Sydney. Sydney is the most attractive city around there. This is where you will hang out, do your groceries, go shopping and so on. If I had to do it again I would depend on the prices, between residence on campus or a house in Sydney.

2. Find a flat or a room

I checked 6 months before leaving and I found an incredible deal on Airbnb. I left with 3 of my classmates/friends so we decided to be roommates. So, we took this house on Airbnb with 4 rooms and around 100 square meters. The host was so helpful. We decided not to live on campus since it was more expensive for smaller. So, we booked this Airbnb located in one of the 2 nearest cities from CBU. As said above, this was a bad choice. So, if you only find flats whether it is in Sydney or Residence in Campus, choose the campus. However, if you find a home at an interesting price in Sydney, take it. If you are leaving alone, which I definitely don't suggest, houses would be too expensive. So, the residence is the best deal, I think.

3. Cost

We had an incredible price, 1500 euros/month for the entire house, so 375 euros/month each since we were 4. I think residence on campus is around 400 to 500 euros per month for a flat shared for 3 or 4 students.

III. When I arrive at the university

A. Inscription at the university

We just followed what MOMA RI sent us by email so do the same. You will have a CBU email so make sure to check what you receive on it. You will have to register your own course on your CBU compass student account. You will receive your identifiants on your CBU email.

Here is the link for your compass student account <https://fed.cbu.ca/adfs/ls>. You will choose your courses there, register and check your final grades.

B. Information on the university

1. Courses

I took 5 courses as asked. 3 was mathematics courses (Calculus for business, Quantitative methods, Statistics) one finance and one accounting. Finance and Quantitative methods were online due to covid. I don't suggest you to take that amount of maths classes if you don't love maths. However, these were super easy to validate since formula sheets are given during exams 😊. I think Calculus for business and Statistics are classes to take. Accounting is more difficult but if you had a good level in France, you have no reason to fail. I was no good in France and I got 50/100 so it's okay.

2. Advice on "contrat d'étude"

You can register for a course and after going once or twice in class, if you didn't like and changed your mind, you can drop the course and take another one but be careful there is a deadline. You can also take courses with prerequisites; you just have to fill a document and to send it to the enrollment part so they can unlock the course for you. I did it for 3 courses.

IV. When I life there

A. Safety

You won't find any safer than this destination, Canada is known to be a safe land. We didn't have any trouble.

B. Phone and Internet

I contracted an offer with red by sfr. You take the cheapest forfait on red by sfr with nearly no options for France. That will cost about 5 euros a month. Then you take the international option which allows you to have internet for 15 or 20 GO per month. This option costs 5 euros. So, you will have a phone service in Canada for 10 euros a month. Don't take a Canadian phone service company. This is way more expensive probably around 50 euros per month.

C. Events

Most of interesting events are held inside CBU (cape Breton university). There is a pub inside CBU where a few events are held. But most of events are sports related. Basketball and soccer are the most valued events in CBU. You will be informed on their Instagram account cbuniveristy or by email.

D. Sports

You can practice several sports in the Fieldhouse inside CBU. This is a must do since you will meet so many people in there. You can practice Basketball, Soccer, Badminton, Volleyball, Crickets, Table tennis, Track and Field. Many events are held around these sports such as tournaments, leagues and world cups. So you'd better like sports because it is probably the only good thing to do in this destination.

E. Eating

Walmart is the cheapest place to buy your groceries. Fast food are a little bit more expensive than France due to tips and taxes. You will probably pay around 200 euros per month for your groceries. Don't go to Sobeys or Atlantic Superstore, these are so expensive.

F. Go to the university : bus, car, bike

If you are living on campus there is no problem about going to CBU. There is a bus line going from CBU to Sydney and from CBU to Glacebay (bus lines are here : <https://www.cbrm.ns.ca/transit>). The university bus line is the Glace Bay to Sydney one. One bus every hour. At the university you can buy a monthly bus subscription for around 45 euros. If you are traveling with 2 or 3 classmates. You can buy a car and sell it before going back to France. It is riskier but so much comfortable. You don't have to rely on bus and you can go anywhere. That is what we did. We bought a 3500 euros car that we sold for 2700 euros at the end. We had to add 800 euros fees to register the car and 300 euros for winter tires. You have to pay for an insurance costing around 180 euros per month. So after selling the car it costed 2500 euros, say 625 euros each, say 155 euros per month. We could have avoided the huge fees for registration because they depend on the price of sale of the car. So one advice, if you buy a car, tell the seller not to write the real amount of the sale, but something way cheaper so you don't pay huge fees. If you do that, having a car could cost you only 50 euros per month more than taking the bus, for total freedom.

G. Travels

Nothing more to add.

H. Any other information you would have liked to know about

To be honest, if you plan to travel alone, don't go here. Time has passed really slowly. First of all, it is really cold and snowy. There will be several days where you can't go out and you didn't want to go out. You can forget sunny days (maybe 5 sunny days in 4 months) and mostly you can forget sun heat. To this you have to add the fact that this is a lost place, low population. People usually go out only on Saturday. And even on Saturdays, the places, club and bars are not crowded. There is only one club and it's a bad one. There is only one decent bar, the irish one in Sydney. Not crowded most of time but this is where you would go out most of your Saturdays. The only things that was good in this destination was doing many sports in CBU, like every day, and being 4. If we had known we would have never gone there. Go there alone and you'll face depression.

